

Worship Leading at Assembly

Revised Fall 2026

Whether this is your first time leading worship or your 100th, we are really glad you are doing this and are excited to hear your voice. **If it's your first time leading, please contact Pastor Anna Yoder Schlabach, who would love to sit down with you and talk about worship: 574-312-5319 or annays@assemblymennonite.org**

Other questions? Contact a member of the Worship Committee:

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Responsibilities

The worship leader ("WL") is the director or head coach of the service. All the moving pieces connect through the WL. You set the vision and help others join you in that vision.

Responsibilities **before** the service

1. Find someone to read scripture (when applicable)
2. Find someone for the [Peace Lamp](#) (or choose to do it yourself)
3. Coordinate with those who are preaching, songleading, and doing children's time. We recommend a quick meeting on Monday to talk about things like themes, songs, any special elements.
4. Send order of service to office@assemblymennonite.org by Friday morning at 9 am.
5. Sometimes: Coordinate any special visuals / props / etc (candles, etc)
6. Sometimes: Make sure the tech team gets any visuals / videos / special requests no later than Friday morning. Set out an offering basket and 2% basket on (First Sunday of every month?) Here is the intro [for the 2% offering](#).

Responsibilities **during** the service

The typical components of the service that you will coordinate, introduce, or lead are below, though not all of these apply every Sunday. Check your worship skeleton for specifics about your Sunday. Read below for instructions for each component.

Preparation

Arrive by 9 a.m. at the latest to prep the following:

- ☐ Singing Bowl (if using)
 - ☐ There is a technique that someone can show you the traditional way of using the bowl (circle the bowl with the wand slowly and firmly and don't give up too soon before it starts singing). Another option is to tap the bowl with the wand to make a ringing sound.
- ☐ Offering basket on the table
- ☐ Matches or lighter for peace lamp (check to make sure you can light it)
- ☐ Check for the presence of any birthday children and check name pronunciation
- ☐ Light birthday candles at 9:29
- ☐ Touch base with sound person about mics needed or projections
- ☐ Make sure table is close to the edge of the platform so that people with walkers do not need to go up a step when bringing the offering forward

What you'll be given

1. A "team" will be arranged for you, including preacher, song leader, children's time leader, and pastor who will lead sharing time and the pastoral prayer that follows the sharing.
2. Worship committee will provide the main visual elements for each season of weeks, while worship leaders are welcome to bring fresh flowers or other items for the table to highlight the week's theme or texts.
3. Two weeks ahead: The church office will send the following to the team:
 - a. A "Worship Grid". This is a chart with all the details and participants in a set of 6-8 Sundays. It also includes an introduction to the season.
 - b. A "Worship Skeleton". This is an order of worship framework. You'll fill in the details and can adjust as needed, but this is the "how we usually do it" starting place.
4. [A peace lamp explanation](#). Pass this on to your peace lamp person.
5. [Worship Gifts survey responses](#). This is a list of people who have said they'd be willing to do things like read scripture, etc. This is a great place to start if you're not sure who to ask.
6. Special additions - things like Communion, special music, covenanting, etc are all coordinated by someone else. You'll need to work them into your framework and adjust for time, but they are not your responsibility.

Technical aspects

The standard technical set up is a mic at the lectern and wireless mics for sharing and children's time. It is very important to inform the tech team in advance if you have tech needs beyond these. Email soundbooth@assemblymennonite.org no later than Friday morning with information and any images, videos, or other extra technical components.

Worship Elements

Opening

One of your main roles as a worship leader is to introduce the morning and provide enough explanation of the context for worshippers to see how the pieces link together. Opening us with a prayer or a call to worship invites us into holy space.

Pro tip: Communicating with the week's preacher early in the week is crucial for building these connections.

It can be helpful to briefly orient people to the shape and theme of the morning. Including a comment about what is planned for second hour is a good practice, as well as noting special events of the day such as fellowship meals, parent-child dedications or guest speakers. **It may also be helpful to note where empty seats are still available in the worship space.**

Birthday Recognitions

If the child has not yet arrived, please check again for the child just before children's time.

Use this script:

“The children among us are important to our worship. We acknowledge and bless our children by recognizing their birthdays (*birthdays to be celebrated can be found in the current AssemblyLine and will be emailed to you in the week before...*) “The candle this morning reminds us that we are celebrating _____’s ____th birthday. (*To the child*) Would you stand? (**Choose one or two things to say from the Assemblyline blurb. Not everything.**) _____(name) You are God’s beloved child. (pause) We are so glad you are part of Assembly. (*To the congregation*) The Assembly Line today tells us more about _____,” and there is a picture on the bulletin board by the mailboxes.”

Selecting Hymns

- **Check in with your song leader early in the week.** Some song leaders like to choose all the hymns, while others would prefer to weigh in after the worship leader makes initial suggestions. As worship leader you may also have a preference for the process. Talk with your songleader to agree on how the hymns will be selected.
- Check with the preacher to see if they have any ideas or requests for particular hymns.
- Pay attention to gendered language in hymns and balance between well known and new hymns.
- Note the topical index and the index of scriptural allusions in the back of Voices Together. The preacher may request a particular hymn.
- **If the song leader wants to use instrumentalists, the instrumentalists must know before Sunday morning. Please contact all musicians (including guitarists) before Friday.** The [worship gifts and interests survey](#) lists people willing to play piano, guitar, drums and other instruments.
- See further [tips for choosing hymns here](#).

Confession

During some seasons of the church year, we include a time for Confession. Check the skeleton to see if Confession is planned for the season.

Offering

Make sure there is a basket on the table. Sometimes they migrate. In addition, on the first Sunday of the month there should be a secondary basket to collect the 2% offerings.

Here are the suggested words: *Assembly’s pattern of bringing the offering forward invites us to think of all that we offer and do as a joyful response to God’s generosity.* If you are leading the first Sunday of the month, please also announce the 2% offering, please note these are new words as of 2023 that reflect our commitment to reparations inspired giving. *On the first Sunday of the month we have two baskets for offerings -- one for our regular offerings; and the other for our 2 % offering -- 2 % of our income which is disbursed to organizations addressing economic injustice locally and around the globe; and is payment on the debt owed locally to Black and Indigenous Peoples for the immeasurable harm of White Supremacy. We do this as an act of restitution and to help us become more of who we are created to be: a community of repentance and repair.*

Here is the offering prayer that we have been using for a number of years. You do not need to use this prayer, but it is available and you may feel free to adapt it to the current worship theme: “Great and loving God: You have given us Your first and Your best. We wish to follow in Your way, and we know that these gifts are one way to start. Deepen our love. Grow in us grace and generosity so that these gifts become more of our first and more of our best. Make us also good stewards of the rest we have kept for ourselves. Some of this money we are giving today will go to (name a local budget item) and some will go to (name a global budget item). Receive these gifts and use them to speed the coming of Your Reign. Amen.”

Scripture

Proclamation of the word is one of the central acts of Christian worship. Find ways to help the congregation to hear the Story so that it can form and shape us.

We suggest the Inclusive Bible, Common English or NRSV but other translations are welcome. Encourage readers to pay attention to gendered language and make adjustments as needed.

Remind scripture readers to end with “**The stories of God for the people of God.**”

Children’s Time

Before children’s time begins, announce the availability of childcare for children 3 & under (up to preschool age)

following children's time. Invite children ages 4-11 and up to the front. **Remind the person providing children's time that it should focus on one idea and not be more than five minutes. Encourage the person doing children's time to check in with a sound person before worship. As you invite children up, you can say,** Children are now invited up for children's time. Children 3 and under are dismissed for little children's time in the middle classroom. After that there is childcare available.

Sharing Time

Each week one member of the pastoral team will offer a pastoral prayer at the end of sharing time. They will generally also lead the entire sharing time. (This often shifts during the summer)

Announcements

The worship leader reads any announcements during the final "Sending" section of worship. The church office will send you some announcements to read. People may also hand them to you during the service.

Benediction

Invite people to stand for the closing hymn and remain standing for the benediction after.

Additional information and tips

Time considerations

We continually face the tension of time for worship. We have all the time we need for the Spirit to move among us, and yet we must pay attention to the clock, especially for the sake of the saints we call Sunday school teachers! **Please begin at 9:30am, even if people are still finding their way in. First hour should end at 10:45am.**

Transitions (also known as glue)

- Transitions are particularly important. **Avoid merely announcing what's next** ("Now it's time for the offering"); rather, help the congregation know where they are going and why.
- Encourage people to greet visitors around them as they take a break, with or without coffee, and announce the starting time and content for second hour. **The second part of the morning should end 50 minutes after worship ends. Adult Ed is 40 minutes and begins 10 minutes after worship ends.**

Space for reflection and Resources

- Intentional and/or guided silence is valued in AMC;
- Make sure you have included prayer at a number of points. As you lead out, make an effort to use inclusive language. Include all people present and be aware of the various facets of God. Books of prayers can be quite helpful.

Resources

- **The bookshelf outside office #12 has a variety of book resources including dramatic readings and calls to worship. See especially the new Voices Together Worship Leader Edition.**
- The backs of our song books have a variety of prayers, calls to worship, and other resources. Assembly has marvelous people resources. Don't hesitate to ask for advice from someone whose worship leading you have appreciated.